PROCESSING ABSENTEE BALLOTS IN A PRECINCT OR ABSENT VOTER COUNTING BOARD

I. Processing Absentee Ballots

In a precinct, absentee ballots may be processed and tabulated as time permits throughout election day. In an absent voter counting board, ballots may be processed and tabulated as soon as the board convenes on election day - but no earlier than 7:00 a.m.

To ensure voter anonymity, absentee *ballots must always be processed in multiples*. Using at least two election inspectors who have expressed a preference for different political parties, proceed as follows:

1. Determine the legality of the ballot:

    A. Verify that the voter signed the outside of the absentee ballot return envelope.

    B. Verify that the name on the absent voter ballot application is the same as the name on the ballot return envelope.

    C. If processing in the precinct, check the hardcopy QVF registration list or Electronic Poll Book to confirm that the voter did not vote in person earlier in the day.

2. If it is determined by a *majority of the board* that the ballot is illegal and should not be counted, do *not* open the return envelope. Write "REJECTED AS ILLEGAL" on the envelope along with the reason. This notation must be initialed by the chairperson.

3. If it is determined that the ballot is legal and should be counted, make a notation on the hardcopy QVF registration list and/or List of Absent Voters. (Follow the clerk's directions on the preferred method for noting voter participation.)

    If using the Electronic Poll Book, locate the voter's name using the search function. Once the voter's name is highlighted, click on "LOCK THIS VOTER RECORD."

If you need to perform an action for this voter, such as issuing or spoiling a ballot, then you must first LOCK THIS VOTER by clicking this button:

Lock this voter record

If you do not LOCK this voter, then you cannot perform any actions for this voter, and no changes will be recorded for this voter.
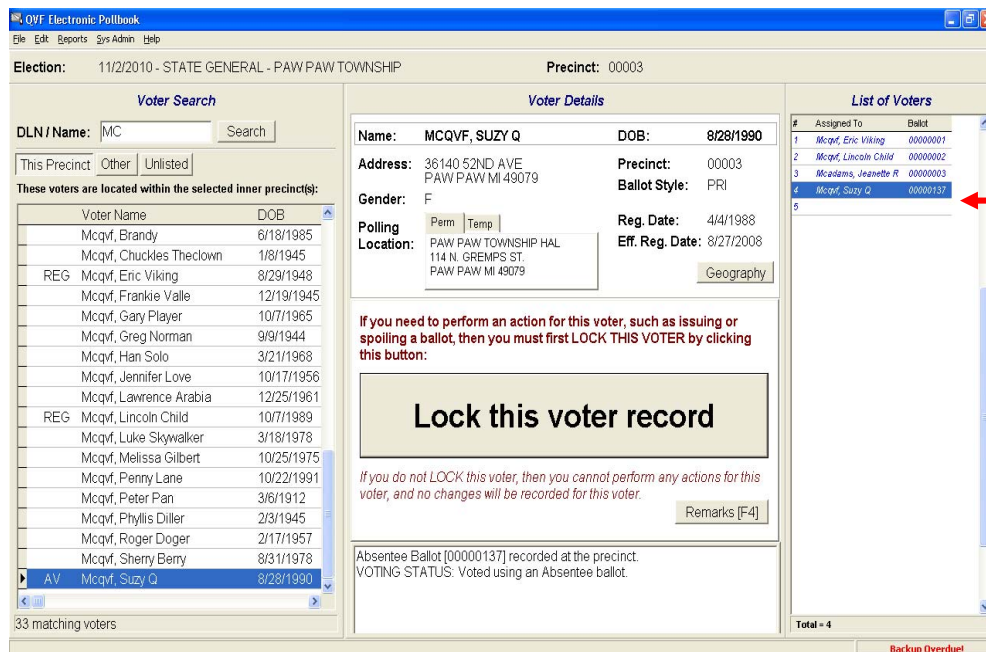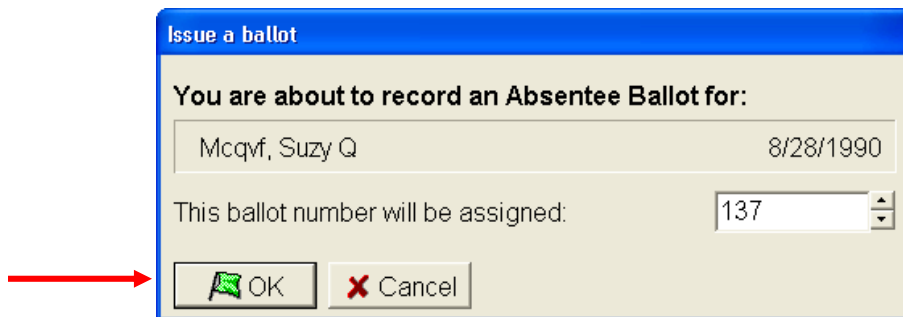
Remarks [F4]

From the Voter Action window, click on "RECORD AN ABSENTEE BALLOT."

Issue a ballot

Regular ballot

Provisional (affidavit) ballot

Provisional (envelope) ballot

Challenged ballot

Other actions

Record an absentee ballot

Spoil a ballot

Reject a ballot

Undo   Undo (Issuance of ballot [00000500])

✕ Unlock this voter without performing any action   Label

Enter the ballot number. NOTE: If the "QVF Absent Voter Module" was used to document the issuance of the ballot, the ballot number will be automatically entered.

Click OK in the "ISSUE A BALLOT" confirmation screen (middle).

4. Remove the ballot from the return envelope.

   If the return envelope does not contain a ballot, make a notation on the remarks page in the Poll Book. If the voter did not return the secrecy envelope, insert the ballot in a secrecy sleeve from your supplies. If the ballot is not properly inserted in the secrecy sleeve, reinsert the ballot in the proper manner.

5. Check to see if the number on the ballot stub matches the ballot number recorded on the absent voter ballot application.

   If the *stub is missing or the ballot number does not match*, enter a notation on the remarks page of the Poll Book and prepare the ballot as a "challenged" ballot.

6. Enter the voter's name, the ballot number and the letter "A.V." (absent voter) in the Poll Book. If working with a List of Absent Voters, highlight the voter's name on the list.

If using the Electronic Poll Book, the voter's name and ballot number are automatically added to the List of Voters report. The letters "AV" will appear to the left of the voter's name in the QVF Precinct List indicating that an absentee ballot was processed.

145	Teresa Achew	A.V.	317	
146	Bill Stevens		~~150~~ 154	Spoiled
147	Zachary Tyler		151	

Print the voter's name, voter number (from Poll Book or List of Absent Voters), ballot number and the letters "A.V." on a blank Application to Vote. The election inspector who checked the legality of the ballot initials the application. (NOTE: If the voter completed the Application to Vote (bottom) portion of the absentee ballot application it is not necessary to complete an additional precinct style Application to Vote.)

7. Process multiple ballots, placing them all together into one secrecy sleeve until ready for tabulation.

    If an absentee ballot is received from a person who is not registered in your precinct according to the QVF List or whose name does not appear on the List of Absent Voters, do not open the return envelope. Contact the clerk for instructions. Return all absentee ballot envelopes – whether opened or not – to the clerk at the end of the day in the A.V. ENVELOPE provided in your supplies.

## II. Handling Ballot Error Messages When Processing Absentee Ballots

If an absentee ballot is rejected by the tabulator it will be necessary to visually inspect the ballot to determine the appropriate course of action. If the rejection is due to a "false read," deposit the ballot into the auxiliary bin for *duplication. NOTE: If processing absentee ballots in a precinct, duplications may not be made until after the close of the polls. If processing absentee ballots in an absent voter counting board, duplications may be made throughout election day.*

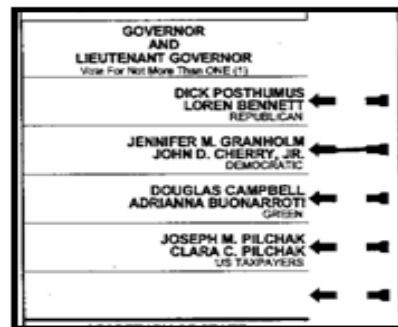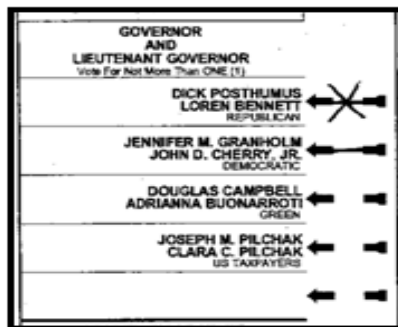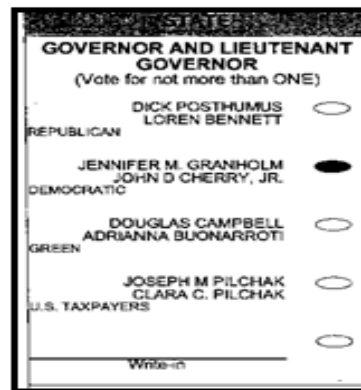The following "false reads" require duplication:

A. **False "overvote" created by ballot correction -** Ballot instructs voter to "Vote for not more than 1." Voter 1) casts vote by completing the arrow or filling in the oval 2) changes his or her mind and strikes vote and 3) votes for preferred candidate by completing a second arrow or filling in a second oval.

   The tabulation equipment is programmed to identify and reject "overvoted" ballots. As a result, the ballot will be rejected due to the appearance of two marks in the race. This affords the election inspector an opportunity to visually inspect the ballot to verify the reason for the rejection. If it is determined that the rejection occurred due to a false read, the ballot must be duplicated. If it is determined that the office or proposal is overvoted, the rejection must be overridden.

False Overvote – Ballot Correction
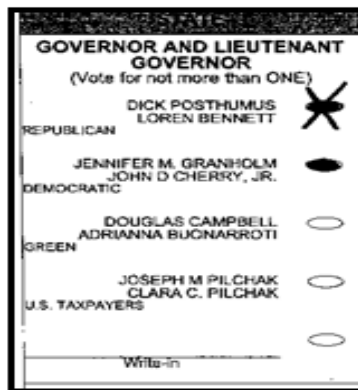
Properly Duplicated

B. **False "overvote" created by invalid write-in -** Ballot instructs voter to "Vote for not more than 1." Voter 1) casts vote by completing the arrow or filling in the oval 2) records an "invalid" write-in under the same office and 3) completes the corresponding arrow or oval. The write-in vote is "invalid" if it contains 1) a fictitious name 2) the name of a candidate who already appears on the ballot for the same office or 3) the name of a person who did *not* submit a "Declaration of Intent" declaring his or her interest in seeking nomination or election to the office as a write-in candidate.

The tabulation equipment is programmed to identify and reject "overvoted" ballots. As a result, the ballot will be rejected due to the appearance of two marks in the race. This affords the election inspector an opportunity to visually inspect the ballot to verify the reason for rejection. If it is determined that the rejection occurred due to a false read, the ballot must be duplicated. If it is determined that the office or proposal is overvoted, the rejection must be overridden.

False Overvote - Invalid Write-In

Properly Duplicated

C. **"Blank" ballot which contains valid votes -** Ballot instructions advise the voter: "To mark your ballot, use only a black or blue ink pen. DO NOT USE ANY OTHER INK COLOR!"

The tabulation equipment is programmed to identify and reject "blank" ballots. As a result, the ballot will be rejected due to the tabulator's inability to read any of the votes cast on the ballot. This affords the election inspector an opportunity to visually

inspect the ballot to verify the reason for rejection. If it is determined that the rejection occurred due to a false read, the ballot must be duplicated. If it is determined that the office or proposal is actually blank, the rejection must be overridden.

D. **False "crossover" vote created by ballot correction -** Partisan primary ballot advises voters: "…IF YOU VOTE IN MORE THAN ONE PARTISAN SECTION, YOUR PARTISAN BALLOT WILL BE REJECTED." Voter 1) casts a vote in one of the party columns appearing on the ballot 2) changes his or her mind and strikes vote and 3) votes one or more offices in another party column.

The tabulation equipment is programmed to identify and reject partisan primary ballots that contain a "crossover" vote. As a result, the ballot will be rejected due to the appearance of marks in more than a single party column. This affords the election inspector an opportunity to visually inspect the ballot to verify the reason for rejection. If it is determined that the rejection occurred due to a false read, the ballot must be duplicated. If it is determined that the office or proposal is crossover voted the rejection must be overridden.

False Crossover Vote -
Ballot Correction

Properly Duplicated

E. **False "crossover" vote created by invalid write-in -** Partisan primary ballot advises voters: "…IF YOU VOTE IN MORE THAN ONE PARTISAN SECTION, YOUR PARTISAN BALLOT WILL BE REJECTED." Voter 1) enters an "invalid" write-in in one of the party columns on the ballot 2) completes the arrow or oval and 3) votes one or more offices in another party column. The write-in vote is "invalid" if it contains 1) a fictitious name 2) the name of a candidate who already appears on the ballot for the same office or 3) the name of a person who did *not* submit a "Declaration of Intent" declaring his or her interest in seeking nomination or election to the office as a write-in candidate.

The tabulation equipment is programmed to identify and reject partisan primary ballots that contain a "crossover" vote. As a result, the ballot will be rejected due to the appearance of marks in more than a single party column. This affords the election inspector an opportunity to visually inspect the ballot to verify the reason for rejection. If it is determined that the rejection occurred due to a false read, the ballot must be duplicated. If it is determined that the office or proposal is crossover voted the rejection must be overridden.

False Crossover Vote - Invalid Write-In

Properly Duplicated

III.   Duplication Procedure

Ballots that are processed and tabulated in a precinct may not be duplicated until *after the close of the polls!* Absentee ballots that are processed and tabulated in an absent voter counting board may be duplicated throughout election day.

The procedures for duplicating ballots that contain false "overvotes," ballots which cannot be scanned by the tabulator due to the voter's use of an improper marking implement, attempted corrections, and ballots which contain false "crossover" votes (if a partisan primary) are detailed below:

A.   After identifying the ballots that must be duplicated, count out an equal number of unused ballots. At the top of the first ballot to be duplicated write "1." At the top of the replacement ballot write "Dup 1." Follow the same numbering system for the remaining ballots which must be duplicated, i.e.: "2" – "Dup 2"; "3" – "Dup 3"; etc.

B.   Duplicate the ballots using a reader-checker process with two election inspectors who have expressed different political party preferences. One election inspector calls the valid votes from the original ballot as the second election inspector records the votes on the duplicate ballot. After the completion of the duplication process, the election inspectors who handled the procedure double-check the duplicated ballot against the original ballot.

C.   After the completion of double-checking, the duplicated ballot is tabulated. The original ballot is secured inside the "Original Ballots Envelope."

NOTE: If a mistake occurs when duplicating a ballot, note the error on the ballot and place it into the special envelope labeled "Original Ballots for which Duplicates Were Made." Obtain a new blank ballot for your supplies. If duplicating ballots in a precinct, be sure to include this ballot in the count when reporting the total number of ballots used for duplication in the ballot summary (back of Poll Book).
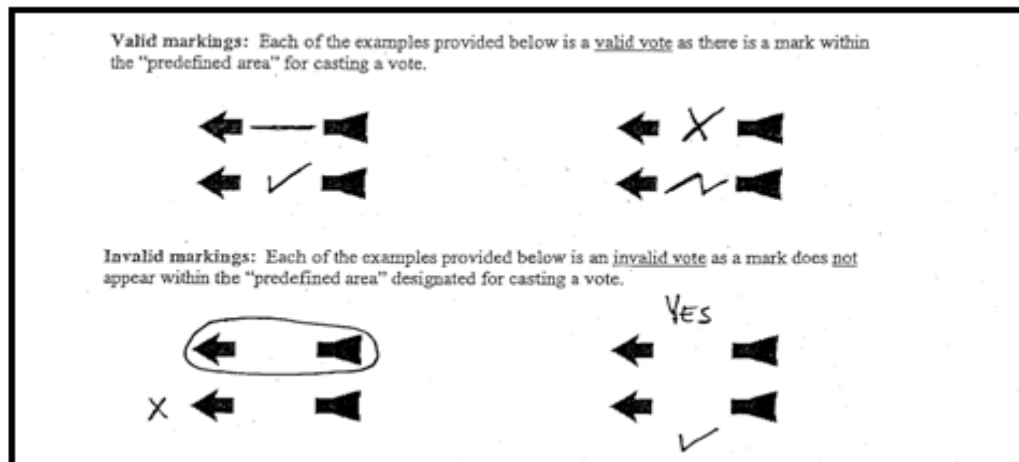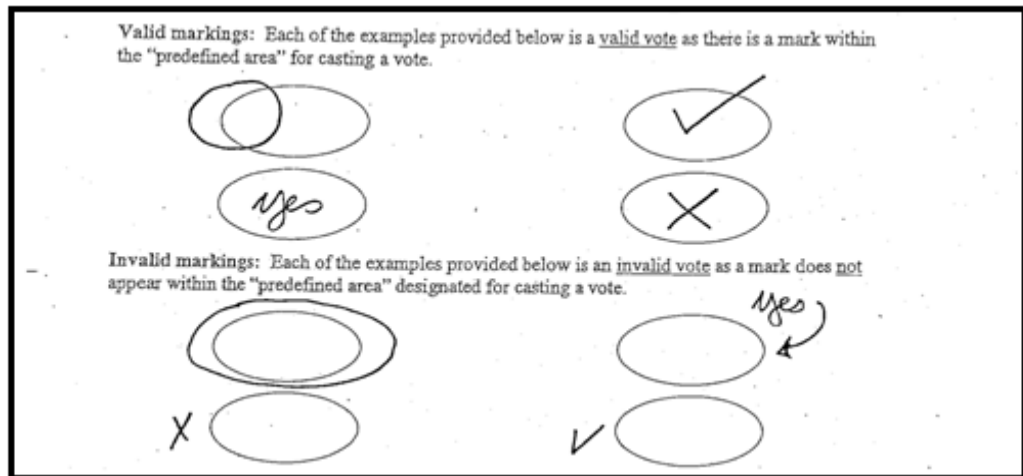
IV.   Optical Scan Validity Standards

Information regarding Optical Scan Validity Standards can be found in the document titled, "Determining the Validity of Optical Scan Ballot Markings."
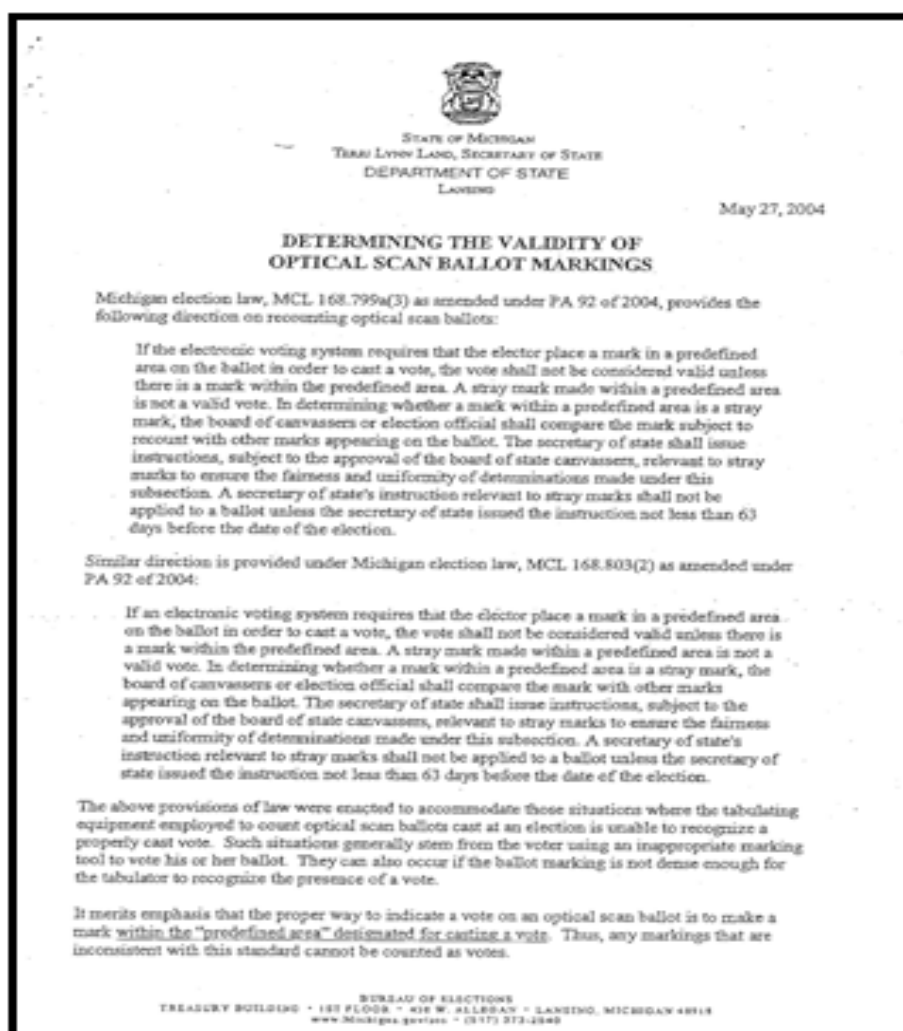

In order for an optical scan ballot marking to be ruled *VALID*, the following two standards must be met:

Standard 1: There must be a mark *within the "target area."* Any mark inconsistent with this standard cannot be counted as a vote.

Valid markings: Each of the examples provided below is a <u>valid vote</u> as there is a mark within the "predefined area" for casting a vote.

Invalid markings: Each of the examples provided below is an <u>invalid vote</u> as a mark does <u>not</u> appear within the "predefined area" designated for casting a vote.

Valid markings: Each of the examples provided below is a <u>valid vote</u> as there is a mark within the "predefined area" for casting a vote.

Invalid markings: Each of the examples provided below is an <u>invalid vote</u> as a mark does <u>not</u> appear within the "predefined area" designated for casting a vote.

Standard 2: That mark must be *consistent* with all of the other marks on the ballot. Any mark that is inconsistent with this standard cannot be counted as a vote.
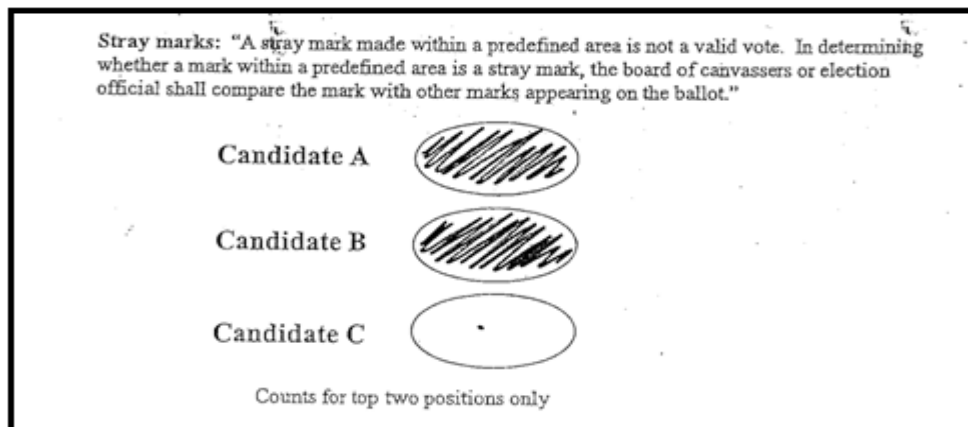
Stray marks: "A stray mark made within a predefined area is not a valid vote. In determining whether a mark within a predefined area is a stray mark, the board of canvassers or election official shall compare the mark with other marks appearing on the ballot."

Candidate A

Candidate B

Candidate C

Counts for top two positions only

Stray marks: "A stray mark made within a predefined area is not a valid vote. In determining whether a mark within a predefined area is a stray mark, the board of canvassers or election official shall compare the mark with other marks appearing on the ballot."
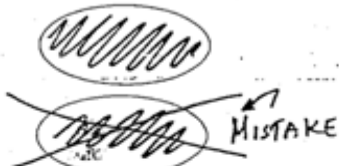
Candidate A ◄————◄

Candidate B ◄————◄

Candidate C ◄ · ◄

Counts for top two positions only

NOTE: A correction that causes a "false" tabulator read *does not count* as a valid vote

Corrections: A correction that causes a "false" tabulator read does not count as a valid vote.

MISTAKE

Count for top position only

Counts for top position only

Corrections: A correction that causes a "false" tabulator read does not count as a valid vote.

◄————◄

◄————◄

◄AAA◄ MISTAKE

◄XXX◄

Counts for top position only

Counts for top position only